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REPORT

ON THE

RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT
SCHOOL OF ART, BIRMINGHAM,

IN

The Years 1852, 1853, and 1854.

REPORT on the RE-ORGANIZATION of the GOVERNMENT SCHOOL of
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IN reporting, as requested, upon the re-organization of the Birmingham School of Art, the practical illustration of the principles which the Board of Report, Trade Department of Science and Art has sought, from its formation in 1852, to apply to the direction of the schools in connexion therewith, has been carefully kept in view, whether the changes effected have directly originated with the central authorities, or have simply arisen out of local circumstances or wants.

By indicating methods as well as stating results, it is trusted that the report will be found more useful, as showing how broad principles may be specially adapted to local wants and exigencies. Many difficulties presented themselves, as will be seen by the report, but there were also many favourable circumstances in the peculiar position of the town and district, of which advantage was taken from time to time; the committee, too, earnestly co-operated in promoting the desired changes, and the results have been, so far at least, highly satisfactory. The influence of the school has been largely extended, and nearly three times the number of persons are under a systematic course of instruction in drawing at the present time than in 1851. The cost to the public funds is less, whilst the masters are better paid. The local funds, too, are in a favourable condition, notwithstanding a special expenditure to a considerable amount, resulting from constant improvements in and additions to the material appliances of the institution. Discipline, order, regularity of attendance, and a thorough interest in their work, are the general characteristics of the students, male and female. The classes are filled rather beyond than within the power of the present staff of teachers, whilst a stringent and systematic course of study is gradually but surely taking the place of the former loose and unsatisfactory modes of practice.

Such are the results distinctly and indisputably arrived at, and may be best illustrated by the Tables appended; in one of which, Table I., the classes forming the school in the quarter ending June 1851, with the numbers attending in each, rates of payment, &c., are given from the school books; and in the other, Table II., the present classes at work in the Central and Elementary schools, the Diocesan Training College, and the Parochial Schools of the district, with times of study, numbers in each, rates of fees, &c., are stated in detail.

I now proceed to report upon the means by which the various changes in and additions to the school have been effected, as also the method of re-organization.

The disorganised state of the school in the middle of the year 1851 was a State of the matter of serious difficulty to the Board of Trade and the local committee, and as, at the period at which I accepted the appointment of head master, my duties in connexion with the Great Exhibition would not permit me to commence at once the work confided to me, and the former head master and elementary master having left the school, the local committee obtained the services of several resident artists, who, under the direction of Mr. Peter Hollins, the eminent sculptor, conducted the classes *pro tem.*, and co-operated with the then modelling master. The students were thus kept at work in the best manner circumstances would permit, until the period arrived at which I could give that continuous and systematic attention to the work so absolutely necessary for the proper organisation of the classes. Ultimately I did not commence my duties until November 1851.

By an arrangement with the committee, the first step taken towards the business of re-organization was to watch the working of the whole school, as I found it, during the period which intervened from the above date to the Christmas vacation.

In the male classes this time was spent in an almost vain attempt to obtain Male classes order and quietness. Several students were summarily expelled, others were

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Male even-
ing class.

warned that they would not be re-admitted without they gave evidence of better conduct; and ultimately I reported to the committee, advising the complete closing of all the classes in December 1851, and the re-admission of the students in small sections only, commencing with the best conducted, the most industrious and attentive, and the exclusion, for a time at least, of all persons of doubtful ability and behaviour. To effect this, I carefully noted upon a register, specially adapted to the purpose, the habitual conduct of nearly every student in the school.

One fruitful source of the disorder into which the classes had fallen was the want of anything like a systematic course of elementary study. The advanced classes of the male evening school consisted chiefly of youths and young men whose elementary knowledge of drawing was generally so defective that the simplest examples in the round were beyond their power of delineation; consequently they took little real interest in their work, and the results were very unsatisfactory. The complete absence of everything like order in the class arrangements, discipline in the conduct, or regularity in the attendance of the students, had, as I subsequently ascertained, been the means of driving away many well-conducted students, who, in returning to the school after order was in some degree restored, stated as their reasons for having left, that they were so disturbed by the confusion which prevailed that they could not benefit by their studies. In many instances their drawings, when nearly finished, were either stolen or wilfully destroyed; the facilities for committing these delinquencies being increased by the want of any orderly method of putting away drawings, drawing boards, and materials when not in use. The modelling class was some exception as regards its class work, since the modelling master had not ceased to pay due attention to his students during the period of transition. The operations of this class, however, were much impeded by the very deficient character of the accommodation, and the want of suitable furniture and class-room fittings.

Male day
class.

The male day class, though few in numbers up to September 1851, presented no better condition; and the ill effects of a want of discipline had been greatly increased by the introduction of the drawing class from King Edward's School, a highly endowed educational institution of great local reputation. This accession of 150 school-boys had rendered prompt and decisive measures even more imperative than in the evening class.

Class from
King Ed-
ward's
School.

The above-named drawing class had been conducted for some years by the former head master of the School of Design in a class room at King Edward's School, and a salary of 150*l.* per annum was paid him by the governors, the duties being quite distinct from those of the first-named school. It was proposed, however, that the class should be sent to this school, and that 150*l.* per annum should be paid for the instruction of 150 students. The Board of Trade was induced to agree to the arrangement, with the understanding that its reception was not to interfere with the working of the regular classes of the School of Design; but the question was left open for final settlement between the committee and myself as head master.

On my appointment I strongly objected to the reception of this class, because I feared that the art-instruction expected to be given would partake of the conventional picturesque of the ordinary drawing school. The fact, however, that the majority of students, likely to compose the class, would eventually become the proprietors or managers of manufacturing establishments, appeared to me to render it desirable that they should attend the School of Art, provided the character of the instruction to be given was adapted to their future wants as practical men, rather than to their whims as school-boys; since it was to be expected that as they left King Edward's School to commence the business duties of life, they would, if properly prepared, enter the regular classes of the School of Art.

The class was finally received upon this basis, and the difficult task of bringing it into an orderly condition being achieved, the results calculated upon have been so far realised that several of the most promising students now attending the regular classes of the school received their elementary training therein.

The female class was in a most unsatisfactory state, and presented so many difficulties that it was doubtful if anything could be done with it without first closing it altogether, at least for a period.

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There were 155 students in one class, attending twice each week. Of these not more than twenty were usefully employed, the remainder were either attempting subjects far beyond anything which their previous study warranted, or did not appear to desire to learn to draw. These latter, attracted by the low class fee of 3s. per quarter, or having the privilege of a *free nomination*, attended more as a pastime than for any useful purpose. Their friends called upon them, groups were formed for conversation, and the school was evidently a lounge for idlers rather than a place of study.

As an example of the non-practical character of this class, I may state that of seventy-nine female students who entered on 29th March 1852, only seven stated that they learnt drawing for the purpose of teaching it in the capacity of governesses. The remaining seventy-two stated that they merely studied as an accomplishment, or as an amusement. The consequence of this want of purpose in study was the incessant annoyance of the masters by the pertinacity with which some of these female students aimed at the higher departments of art, such as painting and modelling, without possessing any real knowledge of drawing as a basis. Argument and expostulation were useless, and it became quite clear that the only agreeable, and at the same time effectual method of clearing the class of these persons, would be to make the students pay a rate of fees approaching the value of the instruction provided. When the experiment was tried, at the urgent demands of the Department, in 1853, the result was completely successful.

Such was the state of the classes as regards study and discipline.

The class-rooms, school-fittings, and examples for study were in a very unsatisfactory condition. The casts of ornament, although the collection is one of the best and most extensive in the kingdom, were totally unfit to draw from, through blackness from gas-smoke and neglect. The library, consisting of a lending library and library of reference, was in a disorderly state. The works had suffered from ill-usage, some were lost, and upwards of 100 volumes had to be re-bound before anything could be done with them, consistent with safety.

Class-rooms,
fittings, &c.

The fees paid by the students of the Birmingham school up to March 1853, were very low, and the total proceeds were kept down by the privileges granted by its constitution in connexion with the Society of Arts, through which the donors and subscribers to the latter, and the subscribers to the joint institution, nominated students at a still lower fee, or in cases of nomination prior to January 1851, *free*. This system of *free nomination*, injudiciously exercised in combination with merely nominal fees, had seriously affected the usefulness of the school. The instruction cost little, and was valued at still less. The policy of imparting gratuitous instruction of any kind is at all times equivocal. In nees, special departments of knowledge experience has shown that such instruction is almost valueless in the estimation of the majority of those who enjoy its privileges. Thus, at the period I commenced my duties here, there were 105 free students in the school, and on a careful examination of the attendance books for the months of November and December 1851, and the observation of the conduct of the students as already named, I found that of the seventy-five *free nominees* then in the male evening class, forty were the most irregular in their attendance and the worst conducted in the school. In the female class there were thirty *free nominees*, the majority of whom evidently cared little about the object for which they attended, and left the class when payment of even *half fee* was enforced.

As an illustration of the periods during which some of these students had been receiving gratuitous instruction, although fully able to pay for it, I may state that when, in February 1853, the Department urged upon the committee the thorough revision of the scale of payments, and I submitted a plan for reforming the whole system connected with them, the register of the female class showed that of the twenty *free nominees* then in the school, sixteen attended to learn drawing as an accomplishment or amusement only, whilst only

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four were governesses, or intended to be such. Of the whole number of female students then receiving gratuitous instruction,—

	1	had attended 7 years and 9 months
	1	" 5 " 9 "
	1	" 4 " 9 "
	1	" 4 " 9 "
	1	" 4 " 3 "
	4	" 3 " 9 "
	1	" 2 " 9 "
	10	" 2 " 3 "

Many of the male nominees, too, had attended corresponding periods, and yet were far from being the most advanced students in the school; the rule of dismissal for non-progress, adopted in all other schools, being virtually set aside by the privilege of the donors and subscribers nominating whoever they thought fit, and keeping them in the school for any length of time.

The rate of fees in each class from 1842, the date of the establishment of the school, to March 1853, was as follows :—

Rate of fees from 1842 to March 1853.		Full Fee per Quarter.	Nomination Fee per Quarter.	Students nomi- nated prior to January 1851.
		s. d.	s. d.	
Female class	-	3 0	2 0	Free.
Male Evening class	-	3 6	2 0	Free.
Male Day class	-	5 0	2 0	Free.

The students of the male day class being permitted to attend the evening class *free*.

The change from an absolutely *free nomination* had been made by the committee on the recommendation of Mr. Jagger, the secretary, in January 1851, when it was resolved that in future all nominees of donors and subscribers should pay 2*s.* per quarter, instead of being admitted *free*; but this resolution was *prospective* only, and did not interfere with the large number of free nominees, about 250, then in the school. It was, however, an important precedent, as affecting the privileges of donors, &c., and greatly facilitated the changes it was found desirable to effect at the suggestion of the Department in 1853.

Commence-
ment of
re-organi-
zation.

The work of re-organization commenced in January 1852, with the earnest and active co-operation of the committee. The class-rooms were got into better order, examples of a character more suited to the practical purposes of the school were introduced; and as the operations of the Department ultimately afforded facilities for obtaining proper examples, these became of the greatest value. The objectionable study from French lithographs of heads, in which the majority of the students had been engaged, was gradually abolished; and the study of ornament insisted upon. At the midsummer vacation of 1852, the whole of the class-rooms, furniture and casts, were thoroughly repaired, cleaned, and repainted, and the modelling class-room fitted with proper means of study, by which a larger number of students could be accommodated therein. More recently, provision has been made for the systematic working of classes for geometry and perspective, by a suitable arrangement and new fittings for that purpose. During the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, the committee has expended upwards of 360*l.* out of the local funds, in repairs, alterations, new fittings, and examples.

As already mentioned, the classes were closed in December 1851, and it was resolved that the numbers to be admitted to each should be limited to the class-

room accommodation, and the powers of the masters to attend to them. The male evening class was restricted to 250, and the female class to 120, except that, by an arrangement with the head master of the King Edward's School, a certain number of pupils from the branch schools of that institution, male and female, was to be admitted to each, thus extending the advantages of the drawing class of King Edward's School: the numbers attending the special day class being limited in proportion.

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On re-opening the school in January 1852, a given number of students was admitted to each class, being selected from the best conducted and most attentive, as shown upon the *conduct register* already mentioned. These were classified; and, as quietness and order now became the rule, draft after draft of students entered, until the limit as to numbers was reached, and then the books were closed for the quarter. Many former students were rejected altogether, and a notice sent to their parents or employers stating the cause; such as noisy behaviour, inattention to study, irregularity of attendance, or non-progress. In every case, however, where the parent or employer attended with the student, another trial was promised as vacancies occurred, on a pledge of better conduct being given; and in most cases they were re-admitted after three or six months exclusion. Several of these students are now in the school, and are as remarkable for good conduct, attention, and progress as they formerly were for the reverse.

As order prevailed, the attendance became more regular, and as a systematic and defined course of study was gradually introduced, the progress of the students became plainly evident to themselves, and their interest in their work increased. This was in due time further promoted by the more clearly enunciated system of progressive stages adopted by the Department. Loose methods of work by the senior students of the male classes were discouraged, and eventually forbidden, as setting a bad example to the juniors; thus systematic class work became the rule throughout.

Many minor details connected with the systematic working of the classes, of great importance to the result, such as arrangements for the careful preservation of the drawings and property of the students; orderly and punctual entrance and exit; the exclusion, especially in the female classes, of the numerous idle visitors, all of which materially influenced the result, though not of sufficient importance for further notice in this report. It must be borne in mind, however, that these matters are of real importance in the organisation of a large school, and can never be overlooked without loss of discipline. Nor were these arrangements effected without difficulty, since bad habits are not easily eradicated, and in spite of every precaution for the safety of the property of the students and of the school, a few gross instances of wilful injury to partially finished drawings, and of complete abstraction, such as those already mentioned as having resulted in the former withdrawal of well-conducted and talented students, took place in the early period of re-organization. Nothing of the kind, however, has occurred for nearly two years.

The limitation of the number of students to be admitted to the male evening class, and the female class, involved the adoption of some method by which applicants should be admitted in a systematic manner; and as much dissatisfaction had arisen from the nominees of donors and subscribers having the priority of admission, as well as enjoying the privilege of a *free* nomination, or admission at a reduced rate, it was decided that all applicants should enter their names, age, trade, and residence, with date of application, upon a candidate's list, and that they should be admitted in the exact order of application, except in the cases of teachers of parochial schools and pupil-teachers, to whom priority was given. This applied equally to males and females—a separate list being kept for each. The adoption of this plan proved satisfactory, since the public grant of money in support of the school gave the general public an equal right, at least, to admission in due order, as the aid derived from donors and subscribers gave to their nominees. When these regulations were understood, and it was seen that they were firmly and impartially enforced, no difficulty occurred in the

REPORT ON working of the plan, and complete confidence was established in the public RE-ORGANIZATION OF BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL OF ART. mind that no favouritism whatever existed in the mode of admission.

As the number of candidates increased many had to wait eight or nine months before they could be admitted ; and at the beginning of 1853, so many were waiting for admission, that it became necessary to make provision for their reception in a class. I therefore proposed to the committee to establish an elementary or branch school in another part of the town, and indicated a plan for conducting it. Some time elapsed before a suitable room could be found, but early in 1854, the committee of the St. Peter's Schools, Dale End, placed their boys' school-room at our disposal for *four* evenings per week. This room was, therefore, at once fitted up with suitable gaslights, seats, &c., the latter being so contrived as to be easily removable, in order that they might not interfere with the Day and Sunday schools. The Department having recommended a properly trained teacher, Mr. J. W. Walker, the classes were opened in May last, upon the elementary black-board system of collective teaching, promulgated by the Department for the future preparatory training of students intending to study in Schools of Art.

Increase of Candidates.

Branch elementary school.

The branch elementary school is divided into sections, each attending two nights per week. (See Table II.) By this arrangement, though the room will only accommodate 112 students, yet 224 students can receive instruction twice a week ; 202 being the present number, as it has not been through desirable to fill up the classes to their utmost limits until the school has had time to consolidate itself by a complete and settled organisation. Each section is divided into three classes. Class I., for primary study in lines, and the construction of rectilinear figures. Class II., for more advanced study of curvilinear figures as based upon their angular construction. In these two classes the students draw with white chalk upon black-boards. In Class I., the example to be followed is drawn by the teacher, line by line, in the presence of the students. In Class II., a suitable diagram is hung up for the use of the whole class. The requisite black-boards are provided for these two classes, the minimum expense to the student being thus attained, since he has only to provide himself with white chalk and a holder. In Class III., the students commence their course on paper from elementary outlines, such as Dyce's Examples, and from the series of lessons comprising the "Birmingham School of Art Drawing Book,"* the examples in which were prepared with special reference to the wants of the students of this class in their first essays on paper, and as *home* exercises for the use of the elementary classes of the Central School.

All candidates for admission to the evening classes of the Central School now pass through the branch elementary school, unless they pass a satisfactory examination in outline drawing. Vacancies in the former are filled up by selections from the latter. Students are thus prepared for the more advanced course of the Central School at a minimum cost to themselves and the committee ; whilst the standard of progress upon which the selection is made must inevitably rise with each successive session.

Revision of the rate of fees.

The urgent demands of the Department upon the committee for an equitable adjustment of the rate of fees, rendered the complete consideration of this question imperative in January 1853.

My attention was early attracted to this point with a very sincere desire to accomplish both the thorough revision of the system and rate of payments, whilst keeping in view privileges which had become identified with the existence of the school, the constitution of which presented so many difficulties in its connexion with the Birmingham Society of Arts. The committee was desirous to render the school more self-supporting, but in doing this, it was compelled to preserve the privileges of the donors and subscribers to the above society and their representatives. The fact that the large building devoted

* The Birmingham School of Art Drawing Book, Elementary Series, for the Use of Artizans and others learning Drawing for Practical and Useful Purposes, with Introductory Instructions by George Wallis, Head Master, &c. The Lessons selected and drawn by William Wallis, Elementary Master. Published with the Sanction of the Department of Science and Art. Price 3s. 6d.—Underwood, Birmingham; Chapman and Hall, London.

entirely to the purposes of the school, at little more than a nominal rental, REPORT ON together with an excellent collection of casts, pictures, and valuable books on RE-ORGANI-
art, were the property of the Society of Arts, and that all these advantages were ZATION OF BIRMING-
the result of the liberality of former donors and the older subscribers, rendered HAM SCHOOL OF ART.
it imperative to consider, in some degree at least, their wishes and interests, so
far as they could be made consistent with the real purpose of the school as
established in a great measure by the Government, and partly supported by a
grant of public money.

As already mentioned, the privilege of *free nominations* to any of the classes had been held and largely exercised from the date of the establishment of the school in 1842, not only by the donors and subscribers to the Society of Arts, but by subscribers to the school also. The number of nominations were held *pro rata* according to the amount of donation or subscription, the lowest being *one student for every guinea subscribed annually*, and the highest being *four students for each donation of 100*l.**; special privileges being also retained for the families of donors and subscribers. In fact, the position of the School of Art in its relation to the Society of Arts was a most anomalous one, militating very seriously against the practical utility of the former.

In preparing a plan for effecting the proposed changes, all these difficulties had to be met, otherwise the wishes of the committee to comply with the demands of the Department could not have been carried out; and in January 1853, I submitted a report upon the whole question, suggesting the requisite alterations in detail, and the mode of action, which, with certain necessary modifications and subsequent improvements, was adopted by the committee. The plan involved the abolition of all *free nominations* and substitution of *Abolition of fees at half fee*, the raising of the fees in all the classes in certain proportions, the division of the female class into two parts, viz. a first class for those who desired to learn drawing without any definite industrial or educational purpose, and a second class for those who attended to learn drawing for the purpose of adding to their means of obtaining a livelihood as governesses or otherwise, and who produced a certificate from a donor or subscriber, and signed a declaration to that effect on entrance.

The proposal to abolish all *free nominations* and substitute a nomination at *half fee* to the class in which the nominee studied, though agreed to by the committee, involved a constitutional change which required the sanction of the donors and subscribers assembled at a general meeting. This was duly obtained in February, and the new rate of fees came into operation at the quarter from March 25 to June 24, 1853. The more recent change, made at the suggestion of Mr. Cole, by which the year is divided into a winter and spring session, and the fees demanded in advance for the half-year, instead of a quarter only, has not affected the rate of the fees paid.

The increase in the rate of fees may be thus shown:—

		Former Rate per Quarter.	New Rate per Quarter.	Past and present rate of fees.
Female Classes		s. d.	s. d.	
First Female Class	• • • •	3 0	15 0	
Second Female Class	• • • •	• •	5 0	
Male Classes,—				
Evening Class	• • • •	3 6	5 0	
Day Class	• • • •	5 0	7 6	
		With the privilege of attending the Evening Class <i>free.</i>	Without the privi- lege of attend- ing the Evening class.	
Nominated Students	• • • •	2 0	10 0	
		Or free, if nomi- nated prior to January 1851.	With that privilege.	
			Half the above fees to all the classes.	

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The effects, so far as secession from the school was concerned, were most visible, of course, in the female classes. About thirty students left, but of these at least twenty had never made any progress, and the increased rate of payment no doubt enabled them to understand the more readily how useless any further attempt to learn to draw would be. In the male classes few or none left on account of the increase of fees, and up to the present date the best results have followed the change in all the classes; since being based upon an equitable arrangement, avoiding high fees on the one hand, and ridiculously low ones on the other, it has rid the school of mere idlers, whilst it has secured a rate of payment which, so long as trade remains prosperous, all can afford to pay, and to many poor and deserving students, the nominations at *half fee* may be made far more useful and beneficial than the former *free nominations* were to a class of students who could well afford to pay for their instruction.

The pecuniary results are remarkable, and may be usefully shown in a comparison of the three years preceding the change, with that following it, ending in June each year.

—	1850-51.	1851-52.	1852-53.	1853-54.
General Classes .	£ s. d. 164 4 3	£ s. d. 146 16 3*	£ s. d. 248 8 3†	£ s. d. 408 4 3
King Edward's School Class . }	· · ·	112 10 0	150 0 0	150 0 0
Total each Year .	164 4 3	259 6 3	398 8 3	558 4 3

Thus the proceeds of the very same classes, which in 1850-51 amounted to only 164*l. 4s. 3d.*, were in 1853-54, 408*l. 4s. 3d.* The total amount of fees, including those of the class from King Edward's School, which did not attend prior to 1851-52, being in 1853-54, 558*l. 4s. 3d.*

Another illustration may be usefully given, as showing the results in the three years of re-organization, from January 1st to December 31st, in each year. The first, 1852, being the last complete year at the *old* rates, and the third, 1854, being the first complete year at the *new* rates.

1852.	1853.	1854.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
315 9 3	484 19 6	620 14 3

Of course the pecuniary interests of the masters have been benefited by these successful changes, since by the plans of the Department, brought into operation in 1853, the then reduction of the official salaries has been more than compensated for by a proportionate share of all fees being given to each, and by a more recent arrangement in March 1854, the whole of the *half fees* from nominated students is carried to the masters' fund, which during the past year, 1854, has amounted to 370*l. 13s. 10d.*, whilst the amount of fees still carried to the account of the committee for miscellaneous expenses, has been

* This was the first year of the re-organization. The classes were closed during a portion of the year, and afterwards limited in number, for the promotion of discipline and more complete supervision.

† The last financial quarter of this year (March to June) was the *first* of the new rates, and the fees amounted to nearly *one-half* of the proceeds of the whole year from the general classes, viz. 115*l. 17s. 6d.*

250*l.* 0*s.* 5*d.*, being at the rate of nearly 100*l.* per annum more than had ever been realized to the local fund from the whole fees, until 1852.

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The great pressure of candidates for admission in the male evening class during the years 1852 and 1853, has been already alluded to as the reason for opening the branch elementary school. The question, however, of accommodating these candidates in the central school, by dividing the classes into *two* sections, one attending on *three* nights, and the other on *two* nights per week, thus affording accommodation for nearly twice the number of students, was raised in the report to the committee upon the revision of the rate of fees, &c.; and although experience had proved that the average attendance was not more than three nights per week, yet the prudence of increasing the rate of payment and reducing the privileges of the students at the same time, was so doubtful, that I did not think it desirable to urge so sweeping a change upon the committee; particularly as many really deserving students attended nearly every night. It was decided, however, to open the branch elementary school upon this plan, as already detailed.

The question of fees being satisfactorily settled, it was at once agreed to adopt the division into sections, when that course was proposed by Mr. Cole, on behalf of the Department in March 1854. A careful analysis of the attendance books had shown that the true average attendance of the whole evening classes was only $2\frac{1}{2}$ nights per week, thus showing that though the number of students had reached the limits of accommodation, yet in reality *one half* the space was lost by absences, since there was no certainty whether the attendance on any given evening would be a full or spare one.

The whole question thus resolved itself into the practical one as to whether the students should be allowed, as heretofore, to select the two or three nights on which they could or would attend, or whether the nights should be fixed for them, and by this means a full attendance secured, and, if required, accommodation for nearly twice the number. The only difficulty which presented itself was that of meeting the wants of the more earnest and industrious students, whose full attendance it would have been impolitic to interfere with. This was provided for by permitting those students who desired to attend *five* nights per week, and who distinctly pledged themselves to do so, to enter a *third* section formed expressly for them.

In order to make the division at once complete and comparatively easy, the change was not effected in the Central School until the commencement of the winter session in August last. Prior to vacation in July, notice was given that each student must at once make choice of the section in which he would in future attend, viz. Section A, assembling on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday; Section B, assembling on Tuesday and Thursday; or Section C, which was to be composed of those who pledged themselves to attend five nights per week. This last-named section was exceptional; and as it is not intended to grant this privilege to any future students, it will be gradually abolished, either by the forfeiture of the privilege from irregular attendance, or secession from the school.

The registration of the students in these respective sections was effected by the Deputy Head Master prior to the closing of the classes in July, and those students who neglected to register their choice were subsequently placed in Section B. This worked very effectually, and enabled every one to take his place on the re-opening of the school in August. The only difficulty arose from a few students, not at all distinguished for regularity of attendance or industry, but who desired to still have the choice of the nights on which to attend. Their claim, however, was peremptorily rejected; and they were ordered to take their places in one or other of the final sections, or leave the classes at once.

All new admissions, or rather those students who had gone through their course of training in the branch elementary school, were admitted to Section B only, that is, for two nights per week. This is intended to be the settled practice, and to grant the privilege of attending in Section A, or three nights per week, to those who, during their previous course in Section B, distinguish themselves by industry, progress, and regularity of attendance.

REPORT ON RE-ORGANIZATION OF ART. *Fifty-six* students only, out of 287, entered themselves in Section C, or for five nights per week. On examining the attendance book for the session, at its close on 21st December, *not one* had fulfilled his pledge of attending every HAM-SCHOOL night. Several of the most regular, however, had been absent occasionally from ill health. Of the fifty-six only twenty-nine are entitled to a renewal of the privilege during the ensuing spring session, and these only by an act of grace announced in order to give them every chance of preserving it, viz. that any whose absences during the session of eighteen weeks did not amount to more than nine, or an average of *half a night* per week, should again be permitted to re-enter for five nights.

The results of this sectional arrangement of the male evening class have been satisfactory. The classes are filled with greater regularity, and although, from the fact that the recently established elementary school takes the great mass of the students formerly waiting for admission as candidates, the increase of numbers which the central school is now capable of accommodating has not been realized, yet the fact of fixing the nights upon which students must attend, or absent themselves altogether, is more conducive to order and regularity than the old system of permitting a nominal *five-night* attendance, which practically resolved itself into *two or three* nights only. The fact that nearly twice the number of students can be accommodated and habits of punctuality inculcated by the sectional arrangement, admits of no doubt, and it has been easily accomplished in the Birmingham school by the means detailed.

Sessional Fees.

It must be distinctly understood that the sectional arrangement for attendance in classes is by no means dependent upon another change suggested by Mr. Cole, and adopted at the same time, by which the year is divided into *two sessions*, and the demand made for the fees of a whole session in advance. The winter session, consisting of *four months and a half*, from the middle of August to the end of December, and the spring session of *six months*, from the beginning of January to the end of June in each year.

Upon the practical results of this change, apart from the question of greater convenience in receiving the fees, and of the consolidation of the classes for a whole year, more experience is desirable; as the fact that the half-year's fee now amounts to a sum which many artizan youths have a difficulty in getting together, small as it really is, must not be overlooked; and it is to be feared that some of the poorer, but often more worthy students may be compelled to give up their attendance in consequence. Nominations have been obtained for a few of these, in order to prevent this result, thus remitting half the fee; but this practice cannot be carried very far without producing dissatisfaction. The desire to obtain nominations, too, has visibly increased in all the classes.

Having thus detailed the changes effected in the constitution and working of the school in its more essential features, it may be desirable to mention the extension of its privileges in one or two minor points, all affecting its permanent well-being, such as free scholarships, prizes, and local exhibitions, before proceeding to the more important additions to its sphere of usefulness by the introduction of elementary drawing into the Worcester Diocesan Training College, and a number of Parochial Schools, at the instance and with the assistance of the Department; as also the formation of a class for school-teachers, as an integral part of the Central School.

Free scholarships.

In proposing the abolition of all *free* nominations, it became a question whether the free use of the privileges of the school might not be held out as a stimulant to exertion; thus reversing the action of the gratuitous principle, and instead of the free nominations being enjoyed by, very frequently, the least deserving, place them as rewards for the more meritorious students. With this view, I suggested to the committee the propriety of establishing twelve Free Scholarships, eight for male and four for female students, of not less than two years or more than four years standing in the school. These scholarships to be held for two years, subject, of course, to good conduct and regularity of attendance, and to be awarded with the annual prizes. The male free scholars to be selected from the whole male school, and have admission to all the male classes. The female free scholars to be selected from the second

female class only, but to have admission to both female classes. The privilege to be renewable in all desirable cases at the expiration of the two years, for one or two years additional, as the chairman and vice-chairman might decide; the scholarships being awarded by them on the recommendation of the head master, after a careful examination of the grounds of such recommendation.

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The committee, after due consideration, resolved to establish the free scholarships upon the basis thus detailed; and at the annual distribution of prizes in September 1853, which had been postponed from the usual period (June) in consequence of my absence in the United States, on the business of the Commission to the New York Exhibition, six free scholarships, four to male and two to female students, were awarded, and a similar adjudication took place on a like occasion, in July 1854, thus making up the complete number of twelve free scholarships now held by as many students. The scholarships of 1853 will expire in 1855, and be again adjudicated to eligible candidates, whilst those of 1854 will expire in 1856, and be again awarded.

The influence of these free scholarships has been, so far, beneficial. They are productive of healthy aspirations in the students, whilst the conditions on which they are obtainable, and upon which they are held, promote regularity of attendance and general good conduct in all who hope to distinguish themselves by obtaining the privileges attached to them.

Prior to 1852 the committee had been subjected to much annoyance by the Prizes. dissatisfaction which had resulted from time to time after the annual distribution of the prizes, and it was felt that some change was desirable. Much of this dissatisfaction arose from the want of an orderly arrangement of the classes and a distinct and settled course of instruction, the steady progress through which, in combination with the excellence of the works produced, should be the test of merit. A most pernicious system, too, had obtained, of admitting works in competition for prizes which had *not been* executed in the school, and thus the advanced students had not that inducement to study with regularity in the classes, and place themselves under the constant supervision of the masters, always so necessary to the successful issue of a progressive work, and which the facilities provided by the school in models, examples, &c., are chiefly intended to promote. Students, too, who had left the classes were permitted to re-enter just before the period of the annual prize distribution; thus the students in regular attendance often saw themselves deprived of the reward of their industry by the introduction of new elements into the competition. Such a course could not fail to produce restlessness and dissatisfaction, apart from the fact that the display of works collected for exhibition at the annual meetings gave a factitious appearance to the productions of the school, not at all conducive to its moral tone or usefulness.

My experience as head master at Spitalfields and Manchester had led me to the conclusion that all *set* competitions for prizes were more or less unsound in principle, and impolitic in action. Feverish excitement during one period of the year being followed by listless depression at another, thus destroying that continuity of exertion always so valuable in every kind of study, but more especially in art, inasmuch as technical methods can only be learned by uninterrupted practice. I therefore recommended to the committee to abolish the New plan system of offering prizes for particular works, to recognise no works unless of prize executed in the school in the regular course of study, in order that the public awards. should not be misled as to the real character of the works so executed, and to take the works of a whole year as the basis of the adjudication. Excellence, of course, was to be the primary test, but industry and progress were also to be recognised. Thus series of works, all other things being equal, were to have the preference over single productions.

The committee at once decided upon a trial of this plan, and in the three last prize distributions at the annual meetings of 1852, 1853, and 1854, it has been followed with success. All works of real merit, especially in series, or groups, are rewarded either by the school medal, struck in silver or bronze, by painting

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materials, mathematical instruments, or books. The latter being selected for their bearing on the practice or history of art. No money prizes are given, but the committee has lately sanctioned the purchase of works of merit calculated to be useful to future students as examples of treatment, &c.

The extra amount of work entailed upon the masters by the retention of all works executed in the school over the period of a year, and their classification and arrangement for examination by the prize committee, is no doubt very great. The necessity, too, for careful consideration by the latter, is increased; but this work has been cheerfully performed by all concerned, since there are no misgivings as to the results, which have been satisfactory alike to the committee, the masters, and the students.

Local exhibi-
tions of
works, &c.

It had been the practice from the first establishment of the schools, to exhibit the works of the students to the public during the three days succeeding the annual meeting and distribution of prizes, but the rooms were always closed in the evenings of these days, the only time at which great numbers of persons interested in the works and likely to be benefited by their inspection, could attend. At the first prize distribution after my appointment, that of 1852, not more than 500 persons visited the rooms, inclusive of those who attended the annual meeting, yet this appears to have been about the usual number. In 1853 the committee sanctioned the trial of opening the Exhibition on the three evenings, from 6 to 9, as well as in the mornings from 10 to 4, and 17,396 visitors passed through the rooms. In 1854 the annual meeting was also held in the evening, and a large number of persons attended, many not being able to obtain admission, whilst 11,635 persons visited the exhibition of the works of the students during the three subsequent days and evenings. In each year the numbers given do not include those who attended the annual meetings.

Prize works
from the
Depart-
ment.

The display of the prize works of the students of the various schools transmitted from Gore House, by the Department, for exhibition in September last, was of great value to the students, and also to the public at large, as it enabled those who visited it to understand in a more distinct degree the course of instruction to be pursued in these schools in future, especially in the more advanced classes; whilst it illustrated the practical value of the elementary stages, as a preparatory course. 3,882 persons visited this exhibition, of whom 314 paid 6d. each, and thus the local expenses were met by the proceeds, and a small surplus carried to the local fund.

Lending
Library.

Owing to the transitional state of the classes, the lending library has not been regularly open to the students for the circulation of books since 1851. It is now intended to re-open it to such students as may appear deserving of the privilege, at a payment of two shillings and sixpence per session, instead of *free* as formerly, and to devote the amount which may accrue from these payments, to the purchase of additional works; a small portion of these library fees being assigned to the librarian as a capitation, in the same manner as the masters now share in the class fees.

Parochial
Schools.

The introduction of the system of elementary drawing, as promulgated by the Department, into the parochial schools of the Birmingham district, was effected in April last, when the master of the branch elementary school was appointed. In March a circular was issued calling the attention of the committees of schools of the class under inspection by the Committee of Privy Council, whether so inspected or not, to the provision made by the Department of Science and Art, for meeting the wants of such schools on this point.

At present *six* schools (*see* Table II.), in which 249 boys, and 76 girls, receive instruction in drawing, engage the services of a teacher, for one lesson of one hour per week. This, however, is not more than *one-fourth* the number of schools under inspection in Birmingham, and it is to be feared that the 5*l.* fee, although the minimum at which it is possible to give the instruction, is a sum which many of these schools cannot afford to pay, without a loss of means for providing education in other directions, of more immediate importance to the class of pupils which attend them.

The results in the six schools have been, on the whole, satisfactory. Indeed, in those, which, like the Bluecoat School, are not so subject to a constant change of pupils, they have been of a very gratifying character. This incessant change is an evil which is unfortunately very prevalent in the parochial schools of the Birmingham district, and militates very seriously against the general education of those for whose instruction they are intended. In the special study of drawing it is almost fatal to progress, and thus the managers of these schools hesitate to expend 5*l.* per annum upon instruction from which they cannot hope for those results they would have a right to expect from the expenditure of even so small a sum as that demanded.

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The training college for the diocese of Worcester, Saltley, near Birmingham, has been also attended since April last by a special teacher, and a class composed of 34 students training for school-masters, receives one lesson of two hours per week, with an extra lesson of two hours for the second year's men, in free-hand drawing, black-board practice, geometry, and perspective. The progress in this class has been very satisfactory. For a period it attended at the School of Art on one afternoon per week, until the existing arrangements could be made for the regular attendance of a teacher at the college. The result of an examination in free-hand drawing from the flat, through which I put 29 students present in the class on 1st December, showed that 11 had, in the course of 9 months obtained a sound basis in pure lines and simple construction, 12 had fairly overcome the early difficulties, whilst only 7 could be said to have derived little or no benefit from the instruction, and in most instances this arose from extreme carelessness and inattention, or a distaste for the study of drawing. There is every reason to believe that, with the progress already made, the results of another year's instruction in the class, upon the plan followed during the past year, will prove highly satisfactory.

Diocesan
Training
College.

The school-teachers of Birmingham and the surrounding district showed great anxiety in 1853 that some provision should be made for their special instruction in elementary art, in consequence of a lecture on the elementary principles of drawing to which I invited them in December 1852. Unfortunately the Saturday afternoon of each week was the only time they could engage to attend, and as the heavy duties of the school absorbed the whole of my time and that of the assistant masters on the other days of the week, we could not undertake to form a class on Saturdays. It was desirable, too, that the plans for the instruction of teachers in parochial schools, then organising by the Department, should not be interfered with by any other course of instruction being commenced; therefore it was not until the certified teacher of the parochial schools commenced operations that I felt justified in forming a special class for school-teachers, and arranging for its meeting on Saturday afternoons as desired by them. The number under instruction from April to June last, was twenty-eight, viz. twenty-two males and six females. The number from August to December being nineteen, viz. sixteen males and three females. The fee for this class is 10*s.* per session, for a two hours lesson per week, but it is evident that this must depend very much upon the number of persons availing themselves of the privileges offered, and the class can only be kept up, either by an increase in the numbers attending, or in the rate of payment.

School-
teachers
special class.

It will thus be seen that the course of elementary instruction in public and parochial schools, though fairly begun, has not as yet taken more than a preliminary step in the direction in which the Department proposes to carry it, but from the experience gained, there can be no doubt, that with proper attention and sufficient means, it may be successfully and usefully worked to a satisfactory issue.

The general results of the various changes effected in the course of the three Conclusion, years organisation were briefly stated at the commencement of this report; it therefore only remains to again call attention to the Tables I. and II. appended, as illustrative of the former and present position of the school, and to state that to the constant efforts of the Department, and the cordial co-operation of

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the committee of the school, in combination with my own desire to adapt all necessary changes to the wants and circumstances of the locality, the reformation in and complete organisation of the Birmingham School of Art is to be attributed. Whilst, however, there is reason for congratulation on the progress made, it is not to be inferred that the system or organisation is beyond further improvement. Strict discipline, an orderly and systematic course of study, constant attention to all and every detail, can alone develop its full capabilities.

GEORGE WALLIS,
Head Master and District Superintendent.

December 30th, 1854.

TABLE I.—CLASSES, NUMBER of STUDENTS, RATE of FEES, DAYS and HOURS of ATTENDANCE, &c. in the "SCHOOL of DESIGN," BIRMINGHAM, during the Quarter from March to June 1851.

	Number of Students.			Rate of Fees.	Days and Hours of Study per week.	Remarks.
	Males.	Females.	Totals.			
Female class	170*	170	3s. 0d. per quarter, or 10s. 0d. per annum.	3s. 0d.	Mondays and Wednesdays, from 2 to 4 p.m.	
Male evening class	335†	335	3s. 6d. per quarter.	3s. 6d.	Every evening except Saturday, from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m.	
Male day class	30†	30	5s. 0d. per quarter, with the privilege of attending the evening class free.	5s. 0d.	Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, from 2 to 4 p.m.	
Total students in the school	535	535				
<i>Free Students.</i>						
Nominees of donors and subscribers.						
Female class	89*	89	89	89		
Male evening class	129†	129	129	129		
Male day class	13†	13	13	13		
Total number of students admitted <i>free</i>	231	231	231	231		
Total number of paying students	304	304	304	304		

* In the female class, 81 students paid the full fee, 3s. per quarter. 4 students paid 10s. per annum. 1 student paid 2s., being nominated after January.

† In the male evening class, 190 students paid 3s. per quarter ; and 16 paid 2s. per quarter.

‡ In the male day class, 17 students paid 5s. per quarter.

TABLE II.
CLASSES, NUMBER of STUDENTS, RATE of FEES, DAYS and HOURS of ATTENDANCE, etc., in the CENTRAL and BRANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS of ART, BIRMINGHAM, and the PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS of the BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT.—Winter Session, 1854.

Male Evening Class, divided into Sections A, B, and C.—							
Full-paying, including 17 from King Edward's School		285					
Nominated (half fee)		46					
Pupil-teachers (half fee)		4					
Free Scholars		8					
School-teachers—							
Special Class							
Total numbers in Central School		439	124	563			
BRANCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.							
Section A, full-paying		96	96	0 4 6	0 6 0		
Section B, full-paying		106	106	0 4 6	0 6 0		
Elementary School			202				
PUBLIC AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.							
St. John's School, Derritend		50	50	•	•	•	•
Carr's Lane School		51	12	63	•	•	•
Bluecoat School		40	•	40	•	•	•
St. Philip's School		48	42	90	•	•	•
St. Mary's School		28	22	50	•	•	•
Worcester Diocesan Training College, Salterley		34	•	34	•	•	•
National (Model) School at ditto		32	•	32	•	•	•
Public & Parochial Schools			359				
Total under systematic instruction in the Birmingham District		924	200	Total 1,124			
{ Males.							
{ Females.							

Section A, 132 Students,
Monday, Wednesday,
and Friday, from 7.30
to 9.30 P.M.

Section B, 97 Students,
Tuesday and Thursday
from 7.30 to 9.30 P.M.

Section C, 56 Students,

the above-named five

nights at present.

* None but Students in
the school prior to
June 1884, can attend
in Section C, which
will be gradually abo-
lished.

{ Saturday from 2.30 to
4.30 P.M.

The public and paro-
chial schools pay at the
rate of 5d. per annum
for 40 lessons of one
hour each per week.
These classes are
taught by the master
of the branch ele-
mentary school, and
are regularly inspected
by the head master as
district superintendent.

{ Tuesday and Thursday
from 7.30 to 9.30 P.M.

{ Wednesday and Friday
from 7.30 to 9.30 P.M.

{ Wednesday 3 to 4 P.M.
" 4 to 5 P.M.

Thursday 9.30 to 10.30 A.M.
" 11 A.M. to 12 M.

" 3 to 4 P.M.

Friday 4 to P.M.
" 2 to 3 P.M.

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